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No. 115

## House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
July 22, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable GEORGE HOLDING to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2014, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

#### 23 IN 1—HONDO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GALLEGO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, today, as we continue our journey through the 23rd District, I would like to travel to a small town some 40 miles west of San Antonio. That would be Hondo, Texas.

It is about 9.6 square miles of iconic America, and as you pass the city boundary, you are kindly reminded by a sign: "This is God's country. Please don't drive through it like hell." That sign, erected by the local Lions Club in 1930, deters speeders. It has been fea-

tured on postcards; it has been the subject of many photos sent home by tourists; and it even made the cover of National Geographic magazine.

I remember that sign even as a little kid, long before I-10 was built and when Highway 90, through Hondo, was still the main thoroughfare—the east-west highway—from L.A. to Florida.

Actually, the original sign just read: "This is God's country. Don't drive through it like hell," but as you might imagine, it was a somewhat controversial sign for the 1930s. So, finally, in the 1940s, the word "please" was added to soften the tone and to placate those in town who found the sign a bit too harsh. Today, some 84 years after its installation, that sign still serves as a not-so-subtle reminder to slow down and, perhaps, to take a breath from the everyday rush of life and enjoy the little things, like family and friends and God and country.

Though settled in 1891, the Hondo area, which is now located in Medina County, was first explored by Cabeza de Vaca in 1519, only some 27 years after Columbus arrived in the New World. It displaced Castrovilla as the county seat, and Hondo shares a place in history with the many early Americans who built this Nation through sheer sweat and determination.

With the construction of the Galveston, Harrisburg, and San Antonio Railway, which was built through the county from the east in 1881, Hondo quickly transformed from a small, 25-resident settlement into a trade and shipping center for agriculture and ranching. Hondo was the scene of two bank robberies in the early 1920s. The crooks were the famed Newton Gang, the most successful outlaws in American history. Interestingly, both bank heists occurred on the same night.

Hondo, itself, was incorporated as a city in 1942, and at that time, Hondo applied for a U.S. Army air training facility to be built there. When our Na-

tion was in need, they stepped up. The Hondo Army Airfield was constructed with local funding in 89 days, and it opened on July 4, 1942. The airfield would become the largest air navigation school in the world and would eventually train over 15,000 navigators to serve in World War II.

That airfield still exists, and though it is no longer affiliated with the U.S. military, today, it is a regional facility and is one of the busiest small commercial airports in Texas. Mayor James Danner and city leadership have done a phenomenal job of developing the airfield into a center of transportation and commerce. If your business needs a small airport near San Antonio and not too far from Eagle Ford Shale country, check out the airport in Hondo.

In addition, that airfield is home to one of the largest and most fun and entertaining air shows in Central Texas—and certainly the best air show in all of Congressional District 23. Each year, thousands of airplane enthusiasts descend on Hondo for the air show, which last year featured more than 20 or so World War II-era airplanes. Another feature of the air show was an exhibition called, "Tora, Tora, Tora," a smaller but incredibly well-done reenactment of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, a reenactment which was done using these vintage airplanes. It is a great event to take your kids and your grandkids to.

Hondo is a town of living history as many of its residents are descendants of the original 25 settlers. It is a town not lost in the rush of everyday life, and like much of Texas' 23rd District, its connection and commitment to the U.S. military run deep through its veins.

I invite everyone to take a trip to Hondo and experience iconic America. Remember, this is God's country. Please don't drive through it like hell.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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